

## MDOT Road Show - November 13, 2008

(from Debbie Michaels)

John Porcari opened with a statement that this was a meeting to understand local priorities that would help them meet our citizen's needs.

1.1 billion has been deferred due to the present economy. Projects added this fall will be the first to be deferred, while two projects will still be fully funded for design - Purple Line and Corridor Cities Transitway. Revenue is down - they need a broader base to draw from - need a new model as we cannot depend on the vehicle miles traveled model- increasing sales tax for roads did come up.

Senator Frosh asked about Bethesda BRAC improvements, what is happening? Residents are concerned, this is a national BRAC, and how will they handle it? The present planned intersection improvements will get us up to a D level what about getting us up to a C level

Answer: Neil Peterson, there is smooth sailing with the intersection improvements, but we need to look at the trade offs. The people of Bethesda will be happy with a D intersection - it will seem free flowing compared to what they are use to.

BRAC intersection improvements are moving forward with 98 M still in the pot (for all 3 Maryland BRAC's), they are fully funded for engineering, partly for construction, but more funds will be needed for the construction end of this. This should be the beginning not the end. In Transit Projects, the Bethesda Metro south entrance has been funded for design and Montgomery County has pledged 5 M for this part of the project. (But nothing for BRAC)

In the maintenance end of things, 30% of the Federal bridge fund given to Maryland must be spent in our jurisdiction - this is positive for ongoing bridge enhancements.

Within the Montgomery County Priority List there is nothing BRAC related.

BRAC - the improvements will be done ASAP - there are limits to what can be done - we should think of this as just the beginning (nothing about what will follow). There will be some trade-offs as there are constrained right of ways. Their goal is to have things moving a smooth flowing as possible. (Yep another non answer)

They will be looking to match funding with the feds for transit projects such as the purple line. Feds will match up to 50% for transit projects. They will be looking to the counties for their share.

Bill Bronrott asked: For BRAC and the Purple Line what can we do to strengthen our position for federal funds. How can we help the State with this process?

Answer: We are very optimistic, the level of discussion is nation wide, there is no federal money yet, and they are still talking. We have to look at the benefit for Maryland with new jobs and benefits. This is a federal priority. With the 50/50 stimulus package it would help projects on line, but this doesn't happen fast enough. Maryland has proposed projects will be obligated in 120 days or give the feds their money back proposal. (This is comforting) They would do present CIP - did not answer BRAC question as there is no BRAC in Montgomery County's CIP! Maryland could be looking a hundreds of millions of dollars through this program. The feds do not fund infrastructure. We need to come up with funding sources.

Madaleno - If we were to see congress to take action over the next several weeks what would we get?

Answer: Lots of talk in Congress about this. House of reps support is there. Question is whether the lame duck session will be able to act? 50/50 chance there will be a stimulus package for transportation infrastructure.

Susan Lee asked: Bethesda BRAC is to be the national crown jewel - how will you prioritize?

Answer: Intersections are funded, but nothing else. They need to identify funding for these to keep them a priority. They have 100 M for the 3 bases. The State BRAC sub-cabinet keeps it front and center. Can only work within their means. Must look a several budget years coming to move these forward.

Al Carr asked: With reducing single occupancy vehicles while increasing safety and accessibility for bikes and pedestrians - how important is this to MDOT as they look at intersection improvements?

Answer: This is a specific part of the design process. They are looking at better access from the Metro and Navy Med, an enhanced bus system until further infrastructure improvements can be made. Navy med security requirements have to be taken into consideration and to make sure they get the people to their destination inside the fence not just to the gate. (I thought inside the gate was the Navy's responsibility)

MDOT is also looking at replacing 300 intersection lights to LED's with battery backup to improve public safety during power failures. This will take place over the next 3 years. That is 300 out of 3000 state light systems.

Bill Frick asked: You have spoken of the high and low projects for Bethesda BRAC and I would like to know how those are broken out. You have only spoken of the low with the intersection improvements.

Answer: The low are intersection improvements, transit and buses.  
The high are highway, transit and MARC.

B. Frick asked: What about the slip ramp? Is there any hope?

Answer: We have done a study including Federal Highways (the white paper) and there are significant issues. The challenges are on the Capital Beltway and they would not get approval so from their stand point it is off the table.

Bronrott asked Neil Peterson: Will they be holding public hearings for input on the BRAC projects and intersection improvements?

Answer: They will have public hearings within the first six months of next year for the short term improvements. No dates have been set.

Summary:

They continuously spoke of the 3 Maryland BRAC's as a lump. Did not seem to get that we are an urban BRAC and did not want to separate the three.

My take is that we will need to go with our representatives to lobby the feds for money for specific improvements and have them earmarked for Bethesda BRAC. Otherwise if we lobby for the state it will go into the pool and be spread between all three. They constantly speak of the advantages - jobs, benefits, growth - do not seem to understand that this is not the case for our BRAC. They are not looking for fed funds or job creation in Bethesda BRAC.

Debbie Michaels